

from within this committee and others, I would like to have a vote on this amendment. I don't want to take a lot of time. But I am wondering if my friend will propound some type of unanimous consent request so that the Senators on the floor can respond to the presentation by Senator INHOFE, but then give him time. I just think it might make for a more even flow.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, let me respond. I think the simpler thing would be to have the Senator from California, who is the chair of the committee of jurisdiction, go ahead with any statement she wants, and I will withhold my questions at this point. I know there are others wishing to talk about CAFE standards.

The Senator from Oklahoma has indicated a willingness to set his amendment aside. He is not pushing for a vote at this time. Why doesn't the Senator from California go ahead and speak in response to the amendment at this point, and then perhaps we can have the other Senators who want to talk about CAFE standards talk about that issue, and we will see what other amendments we can also line up.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, of course, I support Senator INHOFE's right to offer this amendment, but, to me, it is a disastrous amendment because it is a taxpayer giveaway to the oil companies. And I will explain why it is a total taxpayer giveaway to the oil companies that are making more money now than ever in history.

It doesn't do one thing to expand energy supply—not one thing. It shortcuts many environmental laws, which I will not go into at this time, but if we get further time, I will do that. It shortcuts many environmental laws that protect the air quality which is so important to our families. In California, 9,900 people every year die of particulate matter in their lungs. We cannot afford to say we are going to forget about air quality. That is a disaster. We don't want to become a China where they don't care about their people and their people suffer. We don't want to go there.

In the Energy bill in 2005, oil companies got a huge break, and it was made very attractive for them to open new refineries. My staff informs me that not one company has taken advantage of this break. So there is nothing that I think suggests that even going as far as Senator INHOFE goes, which is a total giveaway, will result in increased energy supply.

This bill never made it out of our committee when the Senator was chairman. It was never offered in the committee since I have been chairman. And if it were to be offered, it would go down.

Let me tell a story about Bakersfield, CA, where Shell Oil owned a refinery. We were all saying how important it was to continue the production

of gasoline. In California, 2 percent of our gasoline supply came from this particular refinery.

Guess what. Shell Oil announces they are shutting down the refinery.

We were stunned, and we said: Why?

They said: We are not making a profit.

Guess what we found out. They were making a huge profit.

Then they said: We can't find a buyer.

We said: Really?

We went to the attorney general. We said: Can you help us?

He got involved. At that time, it was Bill Lockyer. Guess what. Somebody stepped forward to purchase the refinery.

Shell Oil wanted to shut down the refinery because they wanted to manipulate the supply. It is as simple as that—more money in their pocket, vertical integration. These are the people we want to reward with the Inhofe amendment? I think not. I think quite the opposite. I think we ought to agree to Senator CANTWELL's antigouging amendment. I think we would want automatic investigations by the FTC. That is what I think we would need.

I wish to address some other aspects of this bill. As I understand it, there is an aspect of this bill which I want to make sure my colleagues understand before they come to vote on it, if, in fact, we have a vote. When I say this is a taxpayer giveaway, I mean what I say. There are expedited permits, waiver of all kinds of environmental laws, there is access to Federal lands, free. I say to my friend from New Mexico, can you imagine any other industry that gets free access to Federal lands? Not only do they not have to pay for the land, but they get 88 percent of the costs of the refinery if they are on Federal land and 100 percent reimbursement if they are on Indian land. What a situation—at a time when oil company profits are going through the roof and CEOs are coming before us and putting their heads down as we look at the amount of bonuses they are getting—into the tens of millions of dollars. This is the time to give them Federal land for refineries, which they have shown they are not interested in building? Waive all environmental laws to the detriment of the health and safety of America's families? Reimburse them for 88 to 100 percent of the cost of building their plant? What a deal. If people vote for this, I have a little piece of land in a very rocky part of California I could sell you. This makes no sense at this time.

I say to my colleagues, it is very important that we have supply. I am supporting this new fuels mandate. I see wonderful opportunities in the area of cellulose that I think are fantastic, very exciting. I am willing to invest in research so we can use coal in a clean way. These things are all exciting. This is an opportunity for business. We don't have to give away the store to the oil companies to build these refin-

eries when, again, I have experience that tells me they are actually shutting down refineries.

In California, the case in point is the Shell oil refinery in Bakersfield, one of the biggest scandals we had there, with nontruths coming after nontruths.

"We don't really want to close it down, but we have to because it is not profitable." Oh, yes, it turned out it was profitable. They just want to manipulate the supply.

"We can't find a buyer, we are looking high and low and can't find a buyer." In 3 weeks, the attorney general found them a buyer.

Here is the point about this Energy bill which Senator BINGAMAN is managing. It is the product of three or four different committees, and the bills that are included in the majority leader's package are bills that came out of committee. They have gone through the committee. They have been debated, they have been discussed, and they have been voted out. This particular plan of my friend's—he has every right to offer his amendment. I defend his right to offer it. But it never passed our committee even when the Republicans were in control. It certainly would not pass out of committee today. It is a taxpayer giveaway with absolutely no proof that refineries would be built.

I stand so strongly against this bill, on behalf of the American taxpayer as well as in behalf of the American families who want their health protected and do not want us to waive every single environmental law that protects the quality of the air they breathe inside their bodies.

I yield the floor. I will be back to respond to the comments of my good friend from Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Let me respond.

I am not sure what bill the Senator from California is talking about. She didn't really describe this bill at all. Let's go through very quickly her four points, if the Senator from California would like to listen.

First of all, the EDA portion provides grants to local communities, not oil companies. This is not grants going to oil companies. Maybe the Senator from California has not gotten emotional in experiencing what has happened when there are BRAC closings and some of the bases have had to close. But when that happens, the EDA does have the function, and the EDA in this case can provide grants if local communities apply for these grants. If they do not want to apply for them, they do not have to do it. The fund seeks to promote development of future fuels, coal to liquids, cellulosic biomass, not just oil.

This is not the same amendment, I might add, as we tried to pass unsuccessfully by a one-vote margin in the Environment and Public Works Committee.

Second, this idea that there is a rollback in environmental laws—the association representing the environmental